

Such difficulties, of more than a negligible degree of severity, are far commoner than is yet realised by parents generally, or even by many psychologists, I have recently¹ drawn attention to this fact, and to its theoretical significance, in a paper dealing with psychological material gathered from a group of personal letters from mothers and nurses. These letters describe in detail the behaviour of particular children, and ask for practical advice. Out of a total of six hundred and twelve letters, four hundred and twenty raise problems of *difficult* behaviour. I have drawn upon this material in the *Records* chapter, and give a classification of the specific problems dealt with.

In so far as it helps towards the understanding of such difficulties, then, I believe my book to be a contribution to the present general movement for mental hygiene.

There are, moreover, certain aspects of modern nursery technique, for example the growing practice of very early and rigid training in bowel and bladder routine, which I am not sure are soundly based. There are facts which suggest that this early and unremitting attempt to make the child "clean" may be at the best a waste of time, and at the possible worst, an influence tending towards guilt and unhappiness.

Certainly we cannot hope to discover the *best* technique for training the child in personal cleanliness and the connected social standards unless we have some understanding of what these things mean in the emotional life of the child himself. The question is one which calls for further research, and some of the material I offer in this book has a definite bearing upon it. In a later section I take it up again more fully. Here I adduce it only to point out one of the directions in which the facts quoted in this volume may be of indirect benefit to ordinary parents, by helping to modify the

teaching that is
now being given in infant welfare centres and in
books on
nursery training.

c. My third reason for publishing all this
material is its
scientific value. Whether or not the ordinary
parent and
teacher is better off for knowing all these facts, it
is unquestion-
able that neither the academic psychologist nor
the psycho-
therapist can afford to shut his eyes to
them. The most

¹ "Some Notes on the Incidence of Neurotic
Difficulties in Young
Children/" *British Journal of Educational Psychology** Vol.
II,
Parts I and II. ^